

## *State Designated Management Service Organizations*

### *Background*

Management service organizations (MSOs) have emerged as a way to address the challenges associated with provider adoption of electronic health records (EHRs). These challenges include the cost and maintenance of the technology and ensuring the privacy and security of data stored electronically. Unlike the traditional EHR client-server model where the data and technology are hosted locally at the provider site, MSOs offer EHRs hosted in a centralized, secure data center. MSOs enable physicians to access a patient's record wherever access to the Internet exists. Remotely hosted EHRs generally relieve providers from dedicating staff to support the application. MSOs offer services that assist providers in implementing and maintaining an EHR system.

On May 19, 2009, Governor Martin O'Malley signed into law House Bill 706, *Electronic Health Records - Regulation and Reimbursement*. This law requires the Maryland Health Care Commission (MHCC) to designate one or more MSOs that will offer EHRs throughout the state by October 2012. The MHCC convened an MSO Advisory Panel that developed criteria for State Designation. The panel developed criteria that include privacy and confidentiality, technical performance, business practices, resources, security, and operations.

### *What are MSOs?*

MSOs are organizations that assist providers with EHR adoption, implementation and advance use. MSOs have the potential to increase the adoption of EHRs by helping providers overcome the barriers associated with the adoption of EHRs. One way MSOs mitigate barriers to EHR adoption is by assuming responsibility of managing the privacy and security of electronic health information and offering hosted EHR solutions as an alternative to the traditional client-server EHR. These organizations offer centralized administrative and technology services via the Internet to providers in addition to technical assistance, guidance, and education to support providers as they adopt an EHR.

### *What are State Designated MSOs?*

A State Designated MSO is an MSO that has met specific criteria that ensures the organization complies with industry best practices. An MSO applies to the MHCC and meets initial requirements for State Designation to first receive Candidacy Status. The MSO then has one year to achieve accreditation by a nationally recognized accreditation body, which is the Electronic Healthcare Network Accreditation Commission (EHNAC). The MSO must meet over 90 criteria to achieve accreditation, including privacy, security, technical performance, business processes, and resource management. State Designation ensures that the MSO has met a high standard of quality in handling protected health information.

### *What can State Designated MSOs do for your practice?*

State Designated MSOs are required to offer assistance to providers in areas of EHR planning, implementation, staff training, technical support, and becoming advanced EHR users. These MSOs safeguard data through a network operating center that ensures high quality and uninterrupted services, which helps to alleviate the provider's responsibility for the maintenance of patient data. MSOs must provide technical assistance, guidance, and education to support providers in achieving meaningful use, and offer hosted EHR solutions to providers. Typically, the MSO will offer their services on a monthly subscription basis, and may be able to provide multiple EHR products at reduced costs through economies of scale and bulk purchasing.



## ***Benefits of State Designated MSOs***

State Designated MSOs may assist providers by:

- ❖ Mitigating costs associated with acquiring EHRs and other services
- ❖ Providing technical support that usually extends beyond the standard business hours and in some cases is available 24/7/365
- ❖ Enabling physicians to access a patient's record wherever Internet access exists
- ❖ Maintaining EHRs outside of the physician practice; which enables physicians to focus on practicing medicine rather than dedicating staff to support the application
- ❖ Assuming the vendor negotiating role and can secure more favorable pricing for their subscribers
- ❖ Offering connectivity<sup>1</sup> to the statewide health information exchange (HIE)
- ❖ Safeguarding health information through a data center that, by design, ensures high quality and continuous service
- ❖ May offer other services such as:
  - Quality Reporting
  - Patient Personal Health Record
  - Revenue Cycle Management
  - Web-enabled User Groups
  - Medical Billing
  - Procurement, Purchasing, and Materials Management
  - Website Development and Maintenance
  - Search Engine Optimization
  - Privacy and Security Support

## ***CRISP***

The MHCC designated the multi-stakeholder group, the Chesapeake Regional Information System for our Patients (CRISP), to build the statewide health information exchange (HIE). HIE technology supports the flow of health information between physician practices, hospitals, labs, radiology centers, and other health care institutions. HIE allows the delivery of patient information to the right place at the right time and provides safer, efficient and more timely patient-

centered care. For more information about CRISP, please visit:

<http://www.crisphealth.org/ForProviders/ConnectWithTheStatewideHIE/tabid/165/Default.aspx>

## ***State Designated MSOs and the REC***

The Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology awarded CRISP \$6.4 million to implement the Regional Extension Center (REC) for Maryland. An MSO that receives State Designation or is in Candidacy Status can partner with the REC. The REC is tasked with assisting 1,000 priority primary care providers (PPCPs) to implement and become meaningful users of EHRs. The REC will support MSOs as they provide local technical assistance services to these PPCPs.

For more information about the REC, please visit:

<http://www.crisphealth.org/ForProviders/AbouttheREC/tabid/180/Default.aspx>.

## ***Additional available information:***

- ❖ The MHCC MSO for Providers Website:  
[http://mhcc.dhmdh.maryland.gov/hit/mso/Pages/mso/mso\\_providers.aspx](http://mhcc.dhmdh.maryland.gov/hit/mso/Pages/mso/mso_providers.aspx)
- ❖ MHCC's EHR initiatives:  
[http://mhcc.dhmdh.maryland.gov/hit/ehr/Pages/ehr\\_main.aspx](http://mhcc.dhmdh.maryland.gov/hit/ehr/Pages/ehr_main.aspx)

## ***State Designated MSOs***

- Adventist HealthCare ACES Program
- Anne Arundel Medical Center
- CHIP
- Children's IQ Network
- Darnell Associates, Inc.
- Frederick Memorial Hospital
- GBMC
- McFarland & Associates, Inc.
- MedChi Network Services, LLC
- MedPlus, Inc.
- MedTech Engenuity Corp.
- Syndicus
- Wavelength
- Zane Networks, LLC

<sup>1</sup> Currently, MSOs are at varying stages of connectivity to the HIE.